

MORANDUM

ACTION 26758

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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March 16, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER
FROM: ROBERT M. BEHR *RMB*
SUBJECT: Post-Apollo Space Cooperation

Minister Lefevre has sent Alex Johnson a letter (Tab A) requesting USG views on a number of areas relating to post-Apollo space cooperation. These areas include (1) technical opportunities open to European space industry, (2) management and financial arrangements, (3) access to technical data, and (4) the availability of US launch services for European payloads. *OK - put on agenda will David. Should be in soon.*

Once the US views are made known, the governments of the member countries of the European Space Conference will, according to Lefevre, take a decision on the question of collective European participation in the post-Apollo program. This should occur "during the next few weeks". *ask 16 1971*

We have gotten ourselves into a peculiar position where we are negotiating formally (and stiffly) at a political level over a specific program (the Space Transportation System) which has within our own government neither been fully defined nor fully approved. Not only is the venue awkward but the pace seems to have been set by the "Red Queen" -- faster and faster with scant hope for true progress. We are, in fact, facing the danger that in our negotiations what now may be noted as misunderstandings could soon turn into deep seated and destructive bitterness.

We should shift gears and look at the whole program more reflectively.

To do this there is a first requirement to somehow accommodate the legitimate short-term objective of Europeans with regard to a regional telecommunications satellite. If we are satisfied that the system they propose will not function to the detriment of INTELSAT, we should develop a formulation which will assure them that the satellite will be launched without their having to go to the expense of developing a European launch vehicle. We could then address the longer term aspects of post-Apollo cooperation at a pace that is not driven by immediate tactical needs.

State is prepared to take this approach. Before answering Lefevre Secretary Irwin will send over for consideration a paper originating with the Ad Hoc Group formed by the Under Secretaries Committee in response to

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~~SECRET~~ NSM 72 (Space Cooperation). The regular membership of the Group will be expanded to include those agencies such as OTP and FCC whose views must be obtained to insure balance. The paper will not seek to lock us in to program decisions, but instead to suggest an approach whereby a program of beneficial cooperation with the Europeans can evolve.

I expect you will want to issue an NSDM in response to the recommendations of the Under Secretaries Committee. In anticipation of that action, I believe you should consider an approach to post-Apollo cooperation that is somewhat skewed from what has been our course to date.

A strong argument can be made that we ought to broaden our perspective and to think in terms that encompass more than the space shuttle. Accepting the premise that cooperation with the Europeans should be, to the extent possible, mutually beneficial, several points need to be mentioned regarding a program that is oriented along a single vector -- the space shuttle.

- European cooperation should not ride or fall on their decision with respect to the shuttle. The program currently lacks the definition necessary to provide a sound basis for decision, and other programs could have considerable promise for both partners.
- Europe may not be prepared to operate effectively as an integrated team member in the shuttle development. As a consequence there could be program delays and unanticipated US costs.
- The shuttle is really nothing more than a truck. The payoffs in technological advancement and scientific knowledge lie in the space station and its experiment modules. These modules could be developed incrementally in accordance with an agreed European priority, or individually as each nation evaluates its own requirements.

In summary, while not discouraging the Europeans from participating in the shuttle development, we could conceivably evolve a more satisfactory pattern of cooperation by suggesting that they focus more on payload and less on the launch vehicle.

A way to test the water would be to explore the concept with FRG Science Minister Leussink when he comes here in April. He is very interested in the post-Apollo program. You may wish to discuss this idea with Ed David when you meet on 18 March.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you discuss with Dr. David the possibility of broadening European interests in post-Apollo cooperation by suggesting other attractive avenues as alternatives to the space shuttle.